

PM, Clinton meeting aborted

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A MEETING between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former United States President Bill Clinton remained a case of so near and yet so far yesterday.

It was Clinton who blew it despite being the one to request for the meeting.

The two Statesmen, who are in Tokyo for different reasons, are sharing the same hotel but a meeting seemed unlikely as Dr Mahathir has a tight schedule during his three-day visit to Japan.

However, Clinton yesterday requested to see Dr Mahathir and Malaysian officials arranged a meeting for 5pm in Dr Mahathir's suite.

Anticipation from both sides soon came to nought when it was brought to notice that Clinton's side had wanted the meeting in his

suite. However, Wisma Putra declined the request.

By the time Clinton agreed to come over and meet Dr Mahathir, it was too late because the Prime Minister had other engagements. The meeting was, therefore, cancelled.

Asked to comment on this during his Press conference last night, Dr Mahathir said they had initially agreed to meet at a certain time but when the allotted time was later changed, it had to be called off because he was not free.

Dr Mahathir had a busy day as a series of discussions and meetings were lined up for him yesterday — starting with Japanese Parliamentarians, KLIA architect Kisho Kurukawa, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Japanese Finance Minister Masajuro Shiokawa.